

# Subject: Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance Consultation

Report to: Planning Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 16 July 2015

This report will be considered in public

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the background to the consultation on the Mayor's proposals to amend his Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance. The Committee has delegated authority to the Chair, in consultation with the Deputy Chair, to agree a response to the consultation by 7 August.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes this report as background to the discussion with invited experts on various aspects of the Mayor's proposals to revise the Housing SPG, and to use information resulting from the meeting in the Committee's response to the Mayor's consultation.**

## 3. Background

- 3.1 The Mayor produces Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents to provide further detail on particular policies in the London Plan. This guidance can be useful where:
- The level of detail is inappropriate for a development plan, for example development briefs, design guides and master plans for areas of intensive change; and
  - There is a need for an urgent policy response to an emerging issue.
- 3.2 The Housing SPG provides guidance on how to interpret and apply the housing policies of the London Plan and will play a key role in ensuring that boroughs attempt to meet the objectively assessed need for 49,000 new homes a year.
- 3.3 The existing (2012) Housing SPG is being revised to reflect the 2015 London Plan, and to provide updates and clarity where necessary. This has required a significant rewrite of some of the chapters (in particular the Supply chapter which deals with housing numbers).
- 3.4 At its last meeting on 16 June, the Committee dealt with the Mayor's proposed Minor Alterations to the London Plan (MALP) - Housing Standards which are also reflected in this SPG.

## **4. Issues for Consideration**

4.1 It is suggested that this meeting focus on a number of revisions:

- Those that have been made in response to recent Government policy (e.g. housing zones and vacant building credits), and;
- Policy on negotiating affordable housing where the London Plan (March 2015) has indicated the need for a revised SPG is required.

### **Negotiating affordable housing**

4.2 The supporting text to London Plan Policy 3.12 (paragraph 3.72) indicates further guidance will be provided on the exceptional circumstances where the full amount of available public investment for affordable housing will not be sought. Members may wish to discuss the details of this guidance and how will this affect the delivery of affordable housing in London.

### **Fixed affordable housing percentages**

4.3 Paragraph 4.3.24 of the SPG discusses how fixed affordable housing percentages may be usefully applied to specific areas such as housing zones and opportunity areas. With the application of a fixed percentage, where an applicant meets the affordable housing target, there would be no requirement to assess if that is the maximum reasonable for that site. Members may wish to discuss the implications of this guidance for maximising the delivery of affordable housing in London.

### **Vacant building credit**

4.4 The vacant building credit was announced by Government on 28 November 2014. Revised planning practice guidance says that where a vacant building is brought back into any lawful use or demolished for replacement, the developer should be offered a financial credit equivalent to the existing gross floorspace of "relevant" vacant buildings in the local authority's calculation of any affordable housing contribution to be sought.

4.5 The SPG will require boroughs to set out how they will assess if a building was made vacant for the sole purpose of redevelopment; this could include setting a minimum vacancy period and marketing requirement. In addition, local policy must be clear that the credit would not be applied to sites with an extant or recently expired permission. Members may wish to discuss how this national policy will potentially affect London and whether this guidance sufficient to protect boroughs from significant loss of affordable housing contributions.

### **Contingent obligations**

4.6 Contingent obligations/review mechanisms are used to maximise affordable housing output by putting in place provisions for re-appraising the viability of schemes or phases prior to implementation in whole or in part. The draft SPG has more detailed guidance on how to engage in such reviews. Members may wish to discuss how the Mayor envisages this policy working and the effect this will have on the delivery of affordable housing.

4.7 The consultation period closes on 7 August 2015. At its last meeting on 16 June, Members delegated authority to the Chair, in consultation with the Deputy Chair, to agree a response to the consultation.

### **Invited guests**

4.8 The following guests have confirmed their attendance at the meeting:

- John Lett, GLA, Strategic Planning Manager, London Plan Team;
- Jennifer Peters, GLA, Senior Strategic Planner, London Plan Team; and
- Alan Benson, GLA, Senior Manager, Housing and Land.

4.9 Additionally, a number of external guests are also expected to attend the meeting.

## 5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

## 6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no direct financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

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### List of appendices to this report:

None

### Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers: none

The Draft Interim Housing Supplementary Guidance is available at

<http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Draft%20Interim%20Housing%20Supplementary%20Planning%20Guidance.pdf>

Contact Officer: Paul Watling, Scrutiny Manager

Telephone: 020 7983 4393

Email: [Scrutiny@london.gov.uk](mailto:Scrutiny@london.gov.uk)